



## DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

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Date: May 26, 2016  
To: Planning Commission  
From: Cody Scheel /Planning Staff  
Subject: Continued Hearing for Vadnais Development Plan / Coastal Development Permit (DRC2015-00047)

On March 24, 2016 your Commission heard a request by Dean Vadnais for a Development Plan / Coastal Development Permit to allow for an existing as-built recycling collection station, and modification to the maximum allowable area for a recycling collection station of 100 square feet. A Development Plan was required to modify the 100 square-foot maximum allowable area set by the land use ordinance standards for recycling collection stations. At the conclusion of the March 24<sup>th</sup> hearing, you asked staff to research and respond to some of the questions, concerns and issues raised during the hearing. The following summarizes the main comments and provides a staff response:

### Concerns and Issues

1. *What is the background and history of the recycling collection station?*

The applicant's representative, Russell Read, told staff that in 1987 the Cookie Crock Market moved to its current location, where it occupied one of the few completed buildings in the shopping center. At that time, the portion of the shopping center where the recycling station is currently located was under construction and not accessible. In 1989, when the Recycling Act took effect, the first recycling station was located in the back portion of the Cookie Crock parking lot for a few months until it was relocated to its current location on Tamsen Drive. There was a brief period of time (2002-2003) when there was no collection station because no operator could be found. Since at least 2003 the station has operated at its current location.

Please refer to the attached correspondence from Mr. Read, attachment 1, for further background information and history.

2. *What exactly are the State requirements for a recycling collection station?*

Staff contacted CalRecycle, and they explained that the Cookie Crock Market at 1240 Knollwood Drive creates a Recycling Convenience Zone (half-mile radius around the market/dealer), and that there are also two other smaller dealers within the zone's radius (Cambria General Store and The Pit Stop liquor store). Though it is commonplace for a recycling collection station to be located on the same site as the dealer that creates a convenience zone, it is not required. A recycling collection station can be anywhere in the zone and serve the zone. If a more ideal location is discovered that is beyond a half-

mile and less than three-miles from the Cookie Crock Market, the recycling center operator can petition CalRecycle to create a Rural Expanded Zone.

CalRecycle will consider a convenience zone exemption when there is an existing recycling center within a reasonable distance. However, the Cookie Crock is not eligible for an exemption because the nearest existing recycling centers are located over 30 miles away in Paso Robles or San Luis Obispo. There are two options for dealers within the convenience zone following the deactivation of a recycling center: A) the dealers can Redeem California Refund Value (CRV) beverage containers in-store at a designated location; or B) the dealers can pay an optional "Opt-out" fee of \$100 per day to CalRecycle. By choosing Option B, the dealer can choose not to redeem CRV in-store and remain compliant with state law. The applicant has indicated that Option A (in-store redemption) is not viable because of Health Department concerns with empty cans and bottles in proximity to food sales. Also, the Cookie Crock's parking lot is already over capacity and cannot accommodate additional vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Option B would be costly for Cambria's only grocery store and would remove an important community service.

3. *What is the background history of the Code Enforcement Case?*

Please refer to the attached memo from Art Trinidad (attachment 2), County Code Enforcement.

4. *Can the Cambria Community Services District (CCSD) provide an alternative location?*

Staff contacted CCSD General Manager Jerry Gruber to discuss alternative locations for the recycling collection station. Mr. Gruber explained that the CCSD does not have a viable location for a community recycling collection station. Two options were discussed: the East Fiscalini Ranch facilities (Rodeo Grounds), and the Resources Yard/Water Treatment Facility at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (please refer to the half-mile convenience zone/location exhibit, attachment 3). Both are secured facilities and act as control centers by means of telemetry for both of CCSD's water and wastewater systems. Based on concerns relating to the community's water supply and Home Land Security measures relating to the protection of community water and wastewater facilities, neither site would be a viable option. Mr. Gruber explained that the CCSD cannot compromise the secured sites. Also, putting a recycling collection station on the East Ranch would be inconsistent with the Ranch Management Plan and future plans to construct a community park. Lastly there are considerable environmental concerns relating to any recycling collection station near Santa Rosa Creek, and the CCSD does not have the funding or staffing resources to operate the collection station.

5. *Have the operators considered/looked into alternative locations?*

Staff contacted Mr. and Mrs. Rodriguez, the current operators of the recycling collection station, and they explained that they have been diligently looking for a new location for a long time now. They talked to a landlord in "Tin City" who would rent a 200 square foot area for \$1,500 per month, and another landlord there wanted to turn it into a major recycling facility requiring County subsidies. The "Tin City" location is over a half mile from the Cookie Crock Market. According to the operators, CalRecycle would not support a Rural Expanded Zone (expansion to a three mile radius) because they have history of a half mile working zone.

The operators also talked to the CCSD about using space at the Rodeo Grounds site in Cambria, but this option was ruled out because of the security concerns noted above. The operators explained that they went to numerous community meetings to ask for ideas and help. Beautify Cambria was very interested in the project but couldn't offer any help.

6. *Is there an alternative location available on-site?*

According to the applicant's representative and the owner of the Cookie Crock, Del Clegg, any other location within the shopping center would cause conflicts with customers of the retail and professional services in the center. It cannot be located in the Cookie Crock parking lot due to its small size, its regular congestion, and traffic from large delivery vehicles. Moving it into the parking lot immediately below its current location would not substantially reduce noise impacts on the neighboring homes, will increase traffic hazards in the lot, and will eliminate needed parking. Despite great efforts to find an alternative location, no practical alternative has been found.

7. *Options for addressing noise, traffic, and security concerns.*

The main issue raised by neighbors at the March 24<sup>th</sup> hearing was noise generated by the existing recycling collection station, specifically the crushing of glass materials. To address this issue, the applicant has offered to reduce the hours and days of the glass crushing operation from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday. Considering the lack of feasible alternative locations and the community need for a recycling collection station, staff is recommending approval of the facility at its present location with the following change to Condition 14 of Exhibit B to read as follows:

14. The existing recycling facility shall operate only between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., and the crushing of glass materials shall only be allowed between the hours of 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday. ~~no crushing of any kind (cans, bottles etc.) is allowed.~~

Note that this condition was originally worded to prohibit crushing altogether, but the applicant has since explained that the facility would not be economically viable without onsite crushing due to the haul distance to the nearest recycler in Santa Maria. This revised condition allows for crushing (recognizing that it's an essential part of the operation) while limiting it to only three days per week during less sensitive hours.

Your Commission also had concerns about vehicle circulation and fire truck access in the parking lot, and suggested installing a hammerhead turn around at the east end of Tamsen Drive, just beyond the existing collection station. Staff discussed this concern with the applicant's representative and he explained that since this type of facility operates on a very small budget it would not be financially feasible to install a hammerhead turn. He also pointed out that the landowner would not allow the improvement, and that the request was not justified because the Cambria Fire Department was satisfied with the existing access road. He explained that the location is convenient for all customers, and it provides a site that limits traffic congestion and threats to pedestrians.

Finally, your Commission had concerns about unauthorized drop-offs and vandalism and noted the need for improved security. Staff discussed this concern with the applicant's representatives, who explained that security lighting would be cost-prohibitive since it would require bringing electrical service to the collection station. Staff is therefore

recommending the installation of battery operated or solar powered security lighting to help deter illicit activity at the collection station. This is reflected in revised Condition 12 in Exhibit B to read as follows:

12. *Prior to final inspection, the applicant shall install battery operated or solar powered outdoor motion sensing lighting. The applicant shall contact the Department of Planning and Building to have the site inspected for compliance with the conditions of this approval.*

## **Conclusion**

The recycling collection station is a State-mandated community service which doesn't have the same resources and flexibility as a typical business to select an operating location. The applicant and current station operators have considered alternative locations on public (CCSD-owned) and private parcels (Tin City) and determined that the existing site is the only feasible location for the facility. Removal of the existing facility would not only be costly for the Cookie Crock, Cambria's only grocery store, but would also inconvenience a large segment of Cambria's population (see attached petition supporting the collection station in its current location, attachment 4). Staff therefore recommends approval of Development Plan / Coastal Development Permit DRC2015-00047 based on the findings listed in Exhibit A and the above revised conditions listed in Revised Exhibit B (attachment 5).

## **Attachments**

1. Correspondence from Mr. Read, May 4, 2016
2. Memo from Code Enforcement staff
3. Half-mile convenience zone/location exhibit
4. Signed petitions in favor of the existing facility
5. Revised Conditions of Approval
6. Letter from Mr. Read, April 25, 2016
7. Further correspondence from Mr. Read, May 4, 2016